

Historical Development

Monitoring of the state's ambient air quality (i.e., level of contaminants found in the atmosphere) is carried out by the cooperative efforts of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), Unified Government of Wyandotte County-Kansas City, Kansas Health Department, Johnson County Environmental Department, Wichita-Sedgwick County Department of Community Health, and the Shawnee County Health Agency.

In September 1969, a statewide sampling network was established in thirty cities throughout Kansas. Twenty of these stations were equipped with high volume monitors that included a glass fiber filter to capture particulate matter (PM). The remaining sites used dust fall jars. These stations, under a state contract, were installed by a private contractor who also initially provided the necessary support maintenance and laboratory services.

In September 1970, KDHE took over the responsibilities for servicing the network that included providing laboratory analysis (except Kansas City), and data analysis for all the stations. During 1970, the air monitoring network was expanded with equipment purchased by state and local agencies in Kansas City, Topeka, and Wichita. By 1978, sufficient data had been collected at several sites to warrant discontinuation of sampling at those sites. KDHE continued to monitor air pollutants at other sites across the state during the 1980's and early 90's.

During 1998, KDHE reviewed and redesigned the entire state air monitoring system to accommodate the state's needs as

well as meet the requirements specified by the EPA. A few monitors were relocated to new sites to operate in conjunction with the new PM_{2.5} monitors. The current statewide network is designed to comply with federal requirements. In addition to equipment installed at permanent locations, KDHE also maintains eight sampling trailers that are moved to Special Purpose Monitoring sites as conditions warrant. These monitoring trailers are used at selected sites across the state to monitor air quality for special studies conducted by KDHE.

In the year 2000, the Bureau of Air and Radiation developed enhanced technical capabilities to prepare for participation in EPA's Ozone Mapping Project. During the ozone season, ozone measurements are retrieved electronically from monitoring sites by KDHE on an hourly basis. The data collected is then electronically submitted to the national Ozone Mapping System (OMS) at Research Triangle Park, NC. Updated monitoring data is used by OMS to generate maps that provide communities with current information about ozone pollution in an easy-to-understand, color-coded format. The color-coded contours of these maps indicate the relative level of health concern based upon the current ozone concentrations. Additional information and maps generated by OMS can be found on the web at www.epa.gov/airnow.

Although the overall quality of Kansas air in 2000 was good, KDHE and the people of Kansas face several challenges in the new millennium as population and industry in the state continue to grow. KDHE will continue to rely on the support and cooperation of citizens, businesses, industry, and federal, state, and local governments to address these challenges and preserve our clean air.